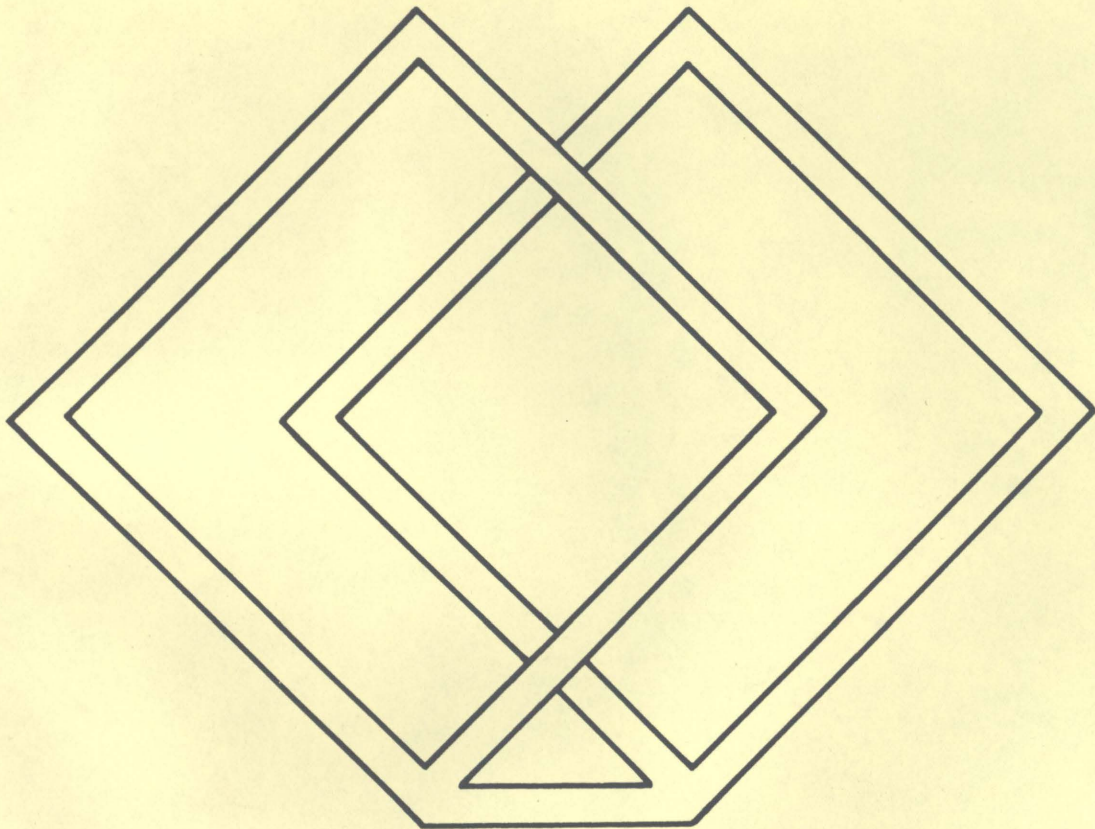


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EDITORIAL

by Frank Gillespie

MURPHY'S LAW IN ACTION

There is some virtue to be found in the inevitability of Murphy's Law, because at least one should always know what to expect. Even in relatively minor things, if one dares to tempt fate, Murphy's retribution is swift and sure.

In the previous issue, lacking inspiration for a topical editorial, I made the mistake of publicly declaring some aspects of my editorial policy. Needless to say, events have conspired to compel me to deviate from two of those policies in this very issue. Not only are two books the subject of review articles, but one book (or booklet) is actually reviewed twice. The reasons for this extraordinary combination will no doubt become clear to readers as they progress through the issue, and I think all will agree that it has worked out very well.

One further twist completes Murphy's triumph and my embarrassment - the inclusion of all this book review material takes the issue beyond the stipulated 50 gram postal limit. Oh well, at least I can claim that my embarrassment consists of riches - would that all the machinations of Murphy had results as happy as this!

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## UFOs: THE SCHOOL EXCURSION HYPOTHESIS

by John Prytz

One can come up with ideas regarding UFOs in the most unlikely places; in the most unlikely situations. You never know when "eureka!" will strike. For example, consider the origin for this article.

Now that the (summer) school holidays have come and gone, once again long suffering staff at the Federal Parliament House in Canberra (where I work) have to endure 'flaps' of hordes of school students who are 'treated' to the joys of an official school excursion through Parliament. (At least they get out of formal classes for the day!) Dutifully, with pre-arranged question sheets and clip-boards at the ready, they, under the thumb of their (equally long suffering) teacher(s) and gaze of the Parliamentary Attendants, wander the public corridors, study the displays, and do their assignment. School day after school day, school month after school month, school year after school year - without end - each new group of students, and each new class, repeats the work of the students and classes that have gone before them. For the teachers and the staff at Parliament it quickly wears thin - been there, done that! For the kids, it's usually a once in a lifetime experience.

While fighting my way through a milling mob of female teeny-boppers (under the guise of mild-mannered school students) who were ogling a photograph of our fearless leader and former folk legend of a Prime Minister, a curious thought leaped out at me - I saw a parallel between those students on excursion and UFO behaviour! "How's that again?" I hear you ask! Consider the following chain of reasoning.

We've all noted that UFOs, given that they (in part at least) are guided by a non-human intelligence(s), appear to neither want to invade us nor establish diplomatic contact. Thus, the theory that if 'they' are neither soldiers nor politicians/diplomats then perhaps they are scientists studying us in a fairly cold and detached manner. I've often argued that point of view.

One problem with that theory, frequently pointed out is "just how long for crying out loud does it take to study us already?!" Even discounting any UFO activity before 1944/1945 ('foo-fighter' era), that still leaves 40 years of study they have done. How many abductions and 'medicals' are really needed before you hit the point of diminishing returns? How many cars do you need to pace and stall before you are satisfied that your device works? How many grass/soil samples do our 'friends' really need? What

about animal 'mutilations'? One would think that after several dozen cases that would be enough - time to move on to something else. It's a good argument, and countered only by a caution to those who make life difficult in that way by reminding them not to be so anthropomorphic. Meanwhile, back in Canberra.....

I no longer pay any attention to the public displays in Parliament House - I know them all by heart. But, if I go to the National Gallery, I become a tourist and scan the displays. The situation is reversed for a staff member at the Gallery who visits Parliament House. Both the Parliament and the Gallery receive many tens of thousands of tourists per year, who go through the same ritual as the hundreds of thousands before them. Many such 'tourists' are in the form of students on formal school excursions. What's old hat to the teacher, as noted before, is a new (once in a lifetime) experience to the student. Eureka! The key to the objection raised above is at hand. A goodly percentage of UFO behavioural 'repeats' is not scientist/teacher behaviour but tourist/student behaviour. The teacher/student analogy is probably the better choice.

I can see their assignment checklist now. "OK class, in small group situations, we're about to go on our excursion tour of Earth. You will do the following:"

"1) Navigation: Plot a course from Point A to Point B via Point C." (Note: A, B, and C are regions of high UFO activity.)

"2) Physics: Select an isolated automobile in motion. Test out the QX-Beam machine on it. Confirm Qijn's theory of EM interference by stalling its primitive engine."

"3) Geology: Obtain samples of the following for later chemical and physical analysis.  
a) Pond water    b) Ocean water    c) Ice  
d) Soil."

"4) Botany: Obtain some samples of what Earthlings call grasses."

"5) Cooking: Use the seeds from your grass samples to make up some of what Earthlings call pancakes. You can use these as items of trade with the natives in obtaining more exotic items to study (for more advanced students)."

"6) Zoology: Find any one of several kinds of bovine ungulates. Perform minor surgery on this animal after putting it down. Take the established list of amputated organs back with you for detailed study in the laboratory."

"7) Human Physiology: Abduct and study one (at the most two together) human beings. To avoid unnecessary trauma to this person, reassure them with any one of a

hundred varieties of mumbo-jumbo (note: religious messages are particularly useful in putting the human at ease). Perform an elementary medical examination on this person. (Note: Advanced honours students doing an approved special project may implant a Qezt for long-term follow-up studies on this person.)"

"8) Piloting skills: Take over the controls of the excursion bus assigned to your small group. Call attention to yourself. When human military aircraft are scrambled in response to this action, engage in a mock dog-fight to test out your skills, agility and abilities in flight. At the end of the excursion, the best of all the raw pilots in their craft will engage in formation flying. (Note: Do not go beyond the echelon formation manoeuvre without prior permission.)"

I think by now readers should be getting the point. No doubt this assignment check list could be easily extended. But I hear you raise up a new objection now. The implication is that there would have to exist a large population and population mix of an alien civilization for this scenario to be viable. From where does this endless procession and reservoir of alien students come? Or is this the discredited end of the excursion analogy?

Clearly the alien's school is not currently located around even a nearby stellar system, hence located over 'short' interstellar distances away. Even 'short' is long in space terms. Unless, of course, faster-than-light travel is possible and cheap, or 'magical' hyper-space really does exist, or else the life spans of said aliens are so long that a trip to Earth is of no more consequence than Sydney school students would find it to hop on an excursion bus and head off to Canberra and Parliament House. I have no intention of trying to argue that point of view. There is no proof that faster-than-light travel is possible, that hyperspace exists, or that an alien being would live three score and ten dozen millenia. There is not even plausible grounds for these ideas for all practical purposes. So, dead end city? No.

I'm of the opinion that somewhere in the solar system there exists a fully established extraterrestrial colony with the alien population and population mix referenced above. They're not on the surface of any of the planets of the solar system. They're living free in their artificial worldship. This

space ark could easily be concealed in the asteroid belt, or disguised as a minor satellite of Jupiter or Saturn, or - and this is my own preferred theory - in orbit around the Earth itself. "But there's nothing in orbit around the Earth but the Moon" I hear you say. Got it in one - think about it!

Though this isn't the place to expand greatly on that idea, I could easily make a lengthy case for that proposition as being the most logical of all the variations on the theme that extraterrestrials are present in the solar system and have been for some considerable time. Briefly however, such a proposition would centre around:

1) Interstellar exploration/colonization is desirable, feasible and inevitable. Interstellar travel from star to star is possible in the long term, and though it takes a 'long' time, long is very very short when compared to the life span of typical mainstream stellar objects. Space arks are the way to go about it.

2) Manufactured worlds (already constructed as the space ark needed in order to cross the interstellar distance barrier) easily continue to serve as 'home' after the destination has been reached. An artificial (space colony) world is a more desirable and environmentally controllable habitat than any natural abode.

3) Within the solar system, Earth must rank as a place that is overendowed with natural resources - water, oxygen, metals, etc. - that space colonists and space colonies would need to supplement their own from time to time. Although Earth is not a desirable habitat, it would be ideal to be close by to this natural resource.

4) Finally, there is that long, long list of lunar enigmas which become more understandable in the light of adopting my 'artificial (space colony) Moon' proposition. Not to forget, despite all of the unmanned and manned lunar probes and materials returned to Earth, not one astronomer anywhere in the world can yet state with any authority where exactly the Moon came from, when it came, and most important of all, how it came (to be). Of course their basic assumption - and I'm not knocking them for it - is that our Moon is a natural world.

So, there you go - the 'school excursion hypothesis'. Though certainly not the be-all-and-end-all of UFO theories, it is, I suggest, a logical refinement of the ET (scientific expedition) hypothesis.



SKY CRASH

Authors: Brenda Butler, Jenny Randles and Dot Street

(Sudbury, Suffolk: Neville Spearman, 1984, 283 pp, illustrated)

reviewed by Mark Moravec

Sky Crash details a case that could turn out to be one of the most controversial UFO cases of the 1980s. In January, 1981, Brenda Butler, an English UFO investigator, was approached by a security officer from the Woodbridge US Air Force Base in East Anglia. He told her that on the night of 27 December, 1980, a UFO had crashed in nearby Rendlesham Forest. As part of the security patrol, he had been called out into the forest. Here he had witnessed a meeting between the Base Commander and the alien creatures piloting the craft.

Thus was the Rendlesham Forest mystery born. With this startling claim, began a saga of rumours, claims and revelations that would immerse the authors in a controversial investigation lasting several years - indeed, an investigation that is still continuing.

The case became more than just a rumour when a memo written by the acting Base Commander, (the then Lt. Col.) Charles Halt, was released by means of the USA Freedom of Information Act. In the memo, Halt described the landing of a brightly illuminated, metallic, triangular object which caused nearby farm animals to go into a frenzy; the discovery of three depressions in the ground with associated radiation readings; and later sightings witnessed by Halt and others, including a red, sun-like object which broke into five separate white objects.

Sky Crash is a detailed chronological account of the authors' investigation. The authors conducted a myriad of interviews with military personnel and with civilians living in the vicinity of the base. A radar operator from a neighbouring base claimed that an unusual target had been detected. After the release of the memo, the British Base Commander, and then Halt himself, were interviewed. "Art Wallace", an ex-airman now residing in the USA, claimed to have been a witness to the landing. His sometimes contradictory claims escalated to a claim

of having had direct contact with the alien beings in an underground military bunker. British Ministry of Defence officials initially denied the existence of any documents related to the case until they were confronted with the copy of Halt's memo to that same department. Sceptics attempted to explain the sighting as due to a local lighthouse. Questions were raised in the British Parliament.

The book, and the investigation itself, are not without faults. I was unimpressed by early comments in the book about a "cosmic conspiracy"; an opinion that we have no way of defending ourselves against the phenomena and that we are "not the masters"; and the posing of questions such as "can a cosmic conspiracy be enforced and justified?" and is it perhaps "considered less risky to allow tales of alien contact than to be told the real, dramatic truth?". These sensational claims tend to undermine one's confidence that the authors are going to attempt an objective appraisal of the claims. Fortunately, the text improves.

More serious are the apparent lapses in ethical behaviour during some phases of the investigation. When Dot Street first contacted Col. Halt by telephone, she tape recorded the conversation without asking his permission. Halt later confronted Street and reminded her that it is illegal to record phone calls. Just imagine the loud protestations should a ufologist discover his or her phone calls had been illegally taped! Fortunately, we learn that after the above confrontation, "Dot went straight home and disconnected her recording device from the phone".

A second incident also involved the hapless Col. Halt. Whilst the Colonel was away in America, Butler and Street contacted his son who suggested that the investigators confront his father on his return when he would be tired and suffering from jet-lag and perhaps vulnerable

to answering sticky questions. Amazingly, the investigators agreed. There followed a tragi-comedy where Butler and Street confronted Col. Halt who, not unexpectedly, was not pleased to see them, and escalated to the point where he slammed the door and shouted that if they ever set foot on the base again, he would have them instantly arrested. This actually happened at a later date, although the charges were dropped after the "scare" had taken effect. Perhaps the Colonel can be accused of over-reacting. But the investigators should never have allowed these later provocations to take place. Just because the case is a very interesting and important one, doesn't mean the witness is a non-person devoid of feelings and without his own rights to privacy and decent treatment. Whilst some might argue that military UFO witnesses require more persistent interrogation than civilians, there are still limits to acceptable investigator behaviour which should be observed.

There are a number of possible explanations for the Rendlesham forest mystery. These include:

- \* the misidentification of a meteor and a lighthouse beacon;
- \* an invented cover story for a New Year's Eve drug-taking party;
- \* a mislaunched missile that crashed into the forest, leaking radiation, and which was concealed so as to not add to public pressure against the installation of cruise missiles in England;
- \* the crash and subsequent Western military recovery of the Russian Cosmos 749 satellite (possibly nuclear-powered) which burnt up over Europe and England;
- \* an experimental military vehicle or weapon which was secretly tested at this base because a NASA Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was present if needed

(as might also have been the case with the Cash/Landrum radiation poisoning case which coincidentally occurred about three days later near Houston, Texas);

- \* the landing of an alien spacecraft.

My own conclusion, after reading the various claims and counter-claims detailed in the book, is that there is some circumstantial evidence for a "UFO landing" having occurred. The best evidence for this is in the Halt memo, tape and interviews. The "UFO" was most likely either a military vehicle or weapon, or a non-man-made phenomenon which is currently unidentified. The claims for a contact with alien entities having been made remains at best a rumour, or at worst, an instance of hoaxing or disinformation. Enough questions and conflicting data remain to prevent more definitive conclusions to be made at this stage.

The authors deserve congratulations (albeit with criticism for ignoring some ethical constraints) for doggedly probing a sensational claim. This time it paid off. The book certainly reveals the immense amount of legwork that went into following up all the leads. Developments in the case are still continuing. Since the writing of the book, a tape recording of Colonel Halt's on-the-spot verbal commentary made whilst witnessing his own UFO sighting, has been released.

Unless the whole incident was stage-managed, the Rendlesham Forest case appears to be another example of official agencies (the military and the Ministry of Defence in this particular case) having shown their basic incompetence when dealing with provocative UFO incidents. I just hope that one day a UFO is not "misidentified" as an incoming nuclear missile!

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*One of the most insidious and nefarious properties of scientific models is their tendency to take over, and sometimes supplant, reality.*

- Erwin Chargaff

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"UFO CRASH/RETRIEVALS: AMASSING THE EVIDENCE: STATUS REPORT III"

by Leonard H. Stringfield

review and comments by John Prytz

Crash/Retrievals (CR) in ufology is one of those areas which, if only one were to be fully exposed and fully documented, would settle the long raging debate as to whether or not UFOs - in part at least - had a 'nuts and bolts' basis. Thus, CR should be of interest to us all as we all would like to know whether ufology is a social science or partly the domain of the exobiologist and/or physicist. (Ufology, by the way, I define as the study of true UFOs, not UFOs that have been turned into IFOs.)

One of the ufologists in the forefront of research into this sub-field of ufology is the American Leonard H. Stringfield - a name I'm sure which will ring a responsive chord in most readers' heads. He has recently (June 1982) authored the third status report in his series of pamphlets or booklets titled UFO Crash/Retrievals: Amassing the Evidence. Because of Stringfield's long term, highly regarded, no nonsense, reputation in ufology (in general) and CR (in particular), I would have had no qualms at all in giving the above my personal stamp of approval - without having even cracked the cover. Having cracked the cover of this 53 page document, I would reinforce that and say that this is a must for any ufologist either casually or seriously or intimately interested in CR, and whether or not they tend to be skeptic-pro or skeptic-con. (There can be few 'believers' or 'non-believers' in an absolute sense, at least based on anything approaching scientific evidence/documentation.) There's not very much literature on CR available that isn't either sensational or theoretical. LHS is one of the few covering that down-to-earth (The facts ma'am, just the facts) niche. Having said that though...

I would like to say that you will find the definitive CR answer in this monograph. I would like to say that but I'm not that big a liar! If you are the sort of person who picks up a mystery story and almost immediately turns to the final page to see 'who done it' then this topic and this booklet and this author ain't for you! There is no 'last page' yet in CR - it's been censored! If the UFO is a needle-in-the-haystack, then when it comes to crashed/retrieved UFOs you have trouble finding the haystack, let alone the needle. The plotting is constructed around lots of false clues, invariably anonymous

characters, and often ill-referenced places and dates. Sherlock Holmes/James Bond, where are you now that we really need you?

Alas, LHS is no Sherlock Holmes cum 007 - through no fault of his own I must add. Stringfield can't run this maze; play this game, by his rules. The laws are controlled by mankind's arch-enemy Murphy - whatever obstacle can be placed in your way will be placed in your way! Who wants to run the CR maze where the thousands of blocks, but very few pathways, are in a constant state of ruthless flux!? Leonard H. Stringfield for one - and more power to him for taking on those to whom Murphy has sub-contracted out his dirty work!

These are some of the problems that Stringfield has had to deal with in the CR snarl. LHS hasn't come close to unraveling that snarl through his research work, yet, but then the game isn't over. Meantime, through this (and his previous) document(s), he has tossed us the can of worms to play with, ponder over, and (perhaps help) contribute to. Great stuff this! This document's meat is 12 'first person' CR reports. (There are also 15 2nd-hand case histories and a smattering of other poorly documented cases that are currently in limbo.) Alas, though each of the dozen in turn whets the reader's/researcher's appetite with the promise of a full CR meal, each in turn - when all is revealed - results in dieter's frustration! Witnesses (though known to LHS) are identified as "HJ", or "KA", or "JM". Details we'd like to know (so would Stringfield) never surface because of the "high incidence rate" of "mail irregularities"; the magazine article that told all was confiscated from the publisher and newsstands in 1948 by Murphy's agents; etc. This is unfortunate. Not quite so great stuff this!

Another unfortunate bit is that Stringfield has to take his informants (1st or 2nd-hand) on trust. We have to take Stringfield on trust. Though this I'm prepared to do, there are too many intermediaries between the alleged CR and the reader/researcher at the end of the chain for comfort. Scientific ufology this ain't! Stringfield's work and results, to date, wouldn't carry any weight in a court of law, far less a court of science. But I repeat, this again is no

fault of his. Again, he's not playing by his, or even neutral, rules.

From the point of view of looking at individual CR cases, there's not much to be gained from reading this document - especially for Australians far removed from the scene of the crime. Frustration will be an end result. The only thing one can come to grips with in LHS's document is the patterns that are available for anyone's scrutiny - but they have to do most of that work for themselves. Here perhaps is where Stringfield could have really provided us a service and used his specialised knowledge to begin to weave those thousands of CR loose ends into some sort of overall picture of UFO crash/retrievals, which then could be easily(?) fitted into the Big (UFO jigsaw) Picture (puzzle). Although there is a bit of this in his monograph, we mostly instead have a description of this tree, then that tree, then this other tree - we learn very little about the forest. Although we have the (abbreviated Stringfield) data and we could (and should) do our own independent analysis, there's still no substitute for his having provided his expert broadbrush analysis in addition to and not just (in the main) blow-by-blow, case-by-case, histories. Perhaps in a future document. Anyway, that's my major criticism; others might care less that it is trees, not forests that get the bulk of attention and space. Meantime, on to my analysis of the CR pattern.

From a personal point of view, the pattern weaved by the threads of UFO crash/retrievals suggests there is little, if anything, in CR that would be of interest to either exobiologist-ufologists or sociologist/psychologist-ufologists. Natural scientists won't be interested either. Kindly consider the following points.

1) There has been too much smoke, for far too long in the CR area - and from far too many people. That suggests there's got to be at least a small fire burning somewhere.

2) There's too much smoke fullstop! Though I'm prepared to accept one, two, even a few UFO crash/retrievals over the past 38 years throughout the world, it stretches ETH credibility to suggest there have been dozens of them, clustered around fairly narrow time frames, in relatively few corners of the globe. UFOs are a globally acknowledged phenomenon - UFO CRs aren't. (Of course if only one crash/retrieval story is true in an ETH context then there's egg on the faces of the 'all in the mind' crowd.)

3) Even if there were dozens of crashed extraterrestrial UFOs, it's stretching things that every time, without exception, the event would occur in such a place, at such a time, that the military would, if not first on the scene, at least be able to contain the unfolding events, retrieve the UFO (down to the last bitty sliver), and keep the whole kit and caboodle successfully under their thumb for upwards of four decades straight. Some pretty big stories have oozed out, and been confirmed as an embarrassing result, throughout history, fairly quick-smart, once the leak(s) started. In (the extraterrestrial nuts-and-bolts) CR, there are 100 leaks, yet 100% cover-up - that is, no confirmation from officialdom.

4) If there really were extraterrestrial nuts-and-bolts CRs, with or without extraterrestrials (or their bodies/remains), the story would be of such importance and of such magnitude that I doubt, and seriously doubt at that, that the lid would be as tightly sealed as it still is.

5) Thus, a paradox. I suggest that the CR has a basis in reality. Yet, if that were the case, I also suggest we would be dealing with past historical facts - not past and present rumours and oozing leaks. The key to resolving this is not to reject CR, but extraterrestrial CR!

What if CR 'UFOs' were terrestrial nuts-and-bolts - experimental vehicles designed and tested for the military by the military?

1) We are in no doubt that the military services engage in this sort of top secret research - they'd be shockingly lax not to. Given that, then...

2) You'd expect accidents (crashes) - dozens of them in four decades.

3) You'd expect immediate urgent retrievals, and not only for security reasons. What went wrong? Why? Analysis right down to the last sliver.

4) These CRs would occur in areas, and obviously fairly remote areas, where the military would be on the scene quick-smart following any mishap. Remains, on the other hand, would often have to be shipped to other defence locations, often in populated areas, for detailed analysis. How often does the remote American southwest feature as the site of a CR; Wright-Patterson AFB as the terminal point for the retrieval operations?

5) Military personnel would be more tightlipped, and for far longer periods, about something 'normal' like in-house technological research into experimental aircraft which has obvious national security implications, relative to sensational,



far beyond the normal, events of an extra-terrestrial nature - where the national security implications are far less obvious. However, military personnel who were exposed on the outer fringes to terrestrial CR events, could through lack of knowledge mistakenly interpret the events in a more sensational way because of the unusual degree of activity around them. And with the public association between silver saucers and little green extraterrestrials, a brief sighting of an unusual crashed object - unknown to the person to have been terrestrial because he didn't have any 'need to know' - could be sensationally translated into crashed spaceship.

6) As an aside, terrestrial secret experimental military craft, if in trouble, could easily seek assistance. What better escort - in case worst came to worst - than helicopters? The top secret nature of the vehicle could explain the use of obviously military controlled and operated helicopters - but they would be unmarked to assist in keeping the secret, secret! LHS touches on the topic of unmarked helicopters and their association with UFOs in his booklet.

Of course the obvious question is now "what about the alien bodies?" It is one thing to suggest confusion-in-the-excitement between a crashed unmarked terrestrial experimental craft and a 'flying saucer' crash; quite another to suggest that anyone could confuse a human pilot/crew with that of an alien creature.

Three possible answers here. Perhaps the prototype experimental craft was so small/cramped that the military recruited dwarfs as pilots. Bodies in special suits that had been subjected to crash forces, maybe fire, could take on all manner of less than normal appearances - all the more so if glimpsed quickly and once only.

To the less sophisticated (many 'witnesses' were lower level enlisted personnel, and in the early 50s many would not have achieved even a high school diploma), an unconventional craft with strangely garbed dwarf bodies mutilated by the crash could lend itself to a sensational (and wrong) interpretation.

Perhaps these craft, in the early

stages and known to be prone to malfunctions, carried only animal passengers - the piloting done by remote control. A primate (monkey or ape) mutilated by a crash could also take on the appearance of an out-of-this-world being following a crash - at least to a witness not-in-the-know.

Finally, there is the possibility that the UFO CR leaks are deliberate - and deliberately slanted toward the ETH as it fits in so neatly with the public acceptance of extraterrestrial flying saucers. Anyone chasing the extraterrestrial CR is obviously doomed to frustration and failure - there aren't any; never have been. Meantime, this deliberate misinformation assists in keeping past and present work on terrestrial flying saucers - military secret weapons or vehicles - safe.

This theory helps explain the specific locations, time frames, and countries that have CR tales on the books. But I'd be the first to admit that this isn't a totally satisfactory answer - not that there are any in CR anywhere. Now that's a perfect parallel with the broad field of ufology - no perfect answer!

Even if the answer to CRs lies in the realm of terrestrial nuts-and-bolts, this says nothing about the rest of ufology and ufological phenomena. There still could exist extraterrestrial UFOs and/or 'all in the mind' UFOs apart from terrestrial CRs. Only time will tell I guess whether or not Leonard H. Stringfield, and others too, are really chasing the UFO (as we know, understand and love it) while chasing the CR. Be that as it may, for now... UFO crash/retrievals are a fascinating sub-field of ufology. If you are so fascinated, and can stand the frustration of endless questions without answers, and want perhaps to throw your hat into this ring and try your luck at solving this particular enigma, then I strongly suggest you run, do not walk, to your nearest Post Office and post off a letter and money (\$US 10.00 + \$US 6.00 airmail postage to Australia) to Stringfield\* for a copy of his UFO Crash/Retrievals: Amassing the Evidence: Status Report III. I'm sure LHS would also be pleased to inform you about the availability of his previous documents on CR, as well as his plans for future status reports.

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\* Leonard H. Stringfield, 4412 Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227, U.S.A.

WHEN YOU HAVE ELIMINATED THE IMPOSSIBLE

a review by R. E. Molnar

L. H. Stringfield, 1982. *UFO Crash/Retrievals: Amassing the Evidence. Status Report III.* (Cincinnati: Leonard H. Stringfield) 53 pp.

This is the third in a series of summaries of reports and rumors of crashed flying saucers (by definition, not UFOs) following from Stringfield's book *Situation Red, the UFO Siege* (Doubleday, 1977). This report includes a range of material divided into a series of twelve reports which Stringfield feels are of interest, fifteen reports varying into rumors of lesser interest, and some seventeen related items ranging from hearsay to almost certain hoaxes. They range in time from 1944 to 1978, with reports peaking in 1946-48, 1952-54 and 1962-68. Most reports come from the continental U.S.A. with one each from Hawaii, Mexico and the North Sea. Stringfield does not clearly endorse any of them but does seem to feel that there is something to them. The work is generally well-produced, save for the apparently mandatory slightly out-of-focus, low contrast, suspiciously poorly printed photographs. It is marred by spelling or typographic errors, such as 'extenuated' for 'extensive'. Many of the reports (especially A-1 and A-2) are written in a kind of 1950's men's magazine macho, he-man style that, to me at least, lends a lack of credibility to the reports - a sort of how dare you not believe when the witness said he vomited from the impact of the scene? I wondered why I was asked to review this item, but other than the connection with dinosaurs (yes, that was not a typo on my part, there is a connection with dinosaurs) I have visited many of the areas concerned, lived for extended periods near some, and was even at one of the scenes at the time of the reported incident (well, give or take six months).

I will readily admit that I am sceptical of these reports - no surprise, so is Stringfield. There is no way that I can check how accurately Stringfield's informants have supplied him with information about the reportedly alien craft. What I can check are some of the geological, botanical and zoological (the reported aliens are animals, after all) details, as well as draw conclusions from the reported information on the reported aliens.

Let us start from the ground up, with geological details. Case A-1 (p. 4) reports a saucer crashed into sandy soil, which was "burnt into a powdery substance like crushed brick". Sand, which was presumably reasonably abundant, does not burn as such as it is already oxidised (it is silicon oxide). Maybe the informant was speaking loosely - but just try to crush sand, or sandy soil, into a powder. Instead of being crushed the sand will be forced (or blown) aside leaving a shallow crater. Similarly for case A-2 (p. 6), for the craft to be partly buried it would have to enter the sand relatively slowly. Unless very light, its weight would pull it down, not leave it sticking "edgewise into the sand" and its rotation would likewise remove sand from the immediate site of the crash. Finally, as a long-time resident of Arizona, may I point out that there is no "Mt. Francisco in Arizona" as mentioned in case B-14 (p. 33) - maybe the San Francisco Peaks, a range of mountains, is meant or maybe not.

Accepting a link between UFOs and dinosaurs, the appearance of agriculture in this review should come as no surprise. Case A-8 (p. 4) concerns a craft that landed in Michigan in "a clearing of swamp", which was photographed by an officer who "waded into the marsh", and which by its landing burned a circle into a soybean plot. Afterwards the whole area was bulldozed. This one really bothers me - Michigan is not hot enough even in summer to dry up extensive swamps as this one seems to be, so how could the area be bulldozed? If a bulldozer could get to the landing site without getting bogged, why did the officer have to go wading to get the photos? And finally, soybeans do not grow in swamps, or even very near them, as soybeans are susceptible to rust and this susceptibility is increased in moist environments. This case seems very dubious.

The point of checking these minor details is to establish how accurately the major details may have been reported. If mistakes can be made in minor details, they can be made in major details as well. The problems discussed do not inspire confidence in these reports. But on to major details of the reported aliens themselves.

Here, too, are contradictions and problems. Cases A-1 (p. 4) and A-11 (p. 17) suggest that the aliens lack knee joints, yet item A-2 (p. 7) refers to them crawling "on their hands and knees". Both items A-1 and A-11 refer to the aliens walking without bending their knees - try it. You will see that one's body oscillates up and down



markedly with this method of locomotion. This would be very noticeable to any observer, yet such bouncing is not mentioned. In case A-5 (p. 11) their hands are said to have no opposable thumb - this would make manipulation with the hand very difficult, but not impossible I suppose.

The high point is a section at the end entitled 'The alien hand' featuring two rather poor prints, apparently from the same negative, and some sketches. Where the material came from is not clear, although the possibility that it came from a kind of extraterrestrial, intelligent dinosaur is mentioned (p. 47): "UFO aliens from outer space may have descended from a super smart dinosaur". This follows from Dale Russell's study of *Stenonychosaurus*, a small carnivorous North American form, which suggests, to Russell at least, that had dinosaurs not become extinct some forms may have evolved into intelligent, cultured, technological and graceful creatures like ourselves. As you might expect not all palaeontologists are convinced on this point, in fact not all of them are even interested, but to be sure Russell may be correct. Since I like dinosaurs, the idea appeals to me.

The hand sketched on p. 48 however is not a dinosaurian hand however superficially it looks like one from a carnivorous dinosaur (theropod). It has four fingers, and theropod hands ranged from having five to two fingers. Each of the fingers has three phalanges, and therein lies the problem. Phalanges are the bones of the fingers - looking at the palm view of your hand you can spot where the phalanges are. The sets of wrinkles at the joints delimit each phalanx and you can see that there are two in the thumb and three in each of the other fingers. And in the hand of p. 48 there are three in each finger. However dinosaurs are reptiles, and reptiles usually do not have a phalangeal formula of 2:3:3:3:3 (which gives the numbers of phalanges in the thumb: index:middle:ring:little fingers). Reptiles usually have 2:3:4:5:4. Even in theropods which have lost some of the fingers there are not the same number of phalanges in each finger. Over 150 different kinds of theropods are now known and while admittedly the hands are not known for all these one would expect that a hand with equal numbers of phalanges in the 'non-thumb fingers' would have turned up by now. Consider also that almost no other reptiles, save those well on their way to becoming mammals, have the same number of phalanges in different fingers. The hypothetical bones of the hand are not reptilian in form, but human bones modified to fit. I am afraid that the hand does not convince me.

There is also the photo on p. 47, with what appears to be a right forelimb (or arm) in the centre, a rib cage to the lower right, and an object described as the other arm running diagonally across the upper right. On p. 46 Stringfield quotes a communication about this specimen from a Dr. A. J. Perzigian of the University of Cincinnati. Perzigian says little but I cannot fault what he says. I can however add to it. The arm shows no joints in it, as if skin or flesh were still covering it (not the case with the rib cage). It apparently bears three well-clawed digits. The forearm is very short with respect to the upper arm. The ribs are rather ape-like, anthropoid, in form especially in their curvature which indicates a thorax narrow and deep, not wide and shallow as is the human thorax. Such a thorax would be obvious to any observer but is not mentioned in any of the reports included.

Perzigian is an anthropologist, not a zoologist, so he might not recognise that the 'hand' looks familiar to a zoologist. It looks much like the forefoot of the scaly anteater or pangolin (*Manis*). Now the pangolin has five toes on each foot, those at either edge being reduced in size. The photo is not clear but some objects do lie behind the three clear claws, and they look suspiciously like two further claws. The whole looks like a fabrication with a pangolin forelimb attached to an ape or ape-like rib cage. The forelimb was not completely prepared only the skin and its cover of large, obvious scales removed. This accounts for the absence of joints, they are still covered by flesh (maybe dried) and the short 'forearm', is actually the palm region of the hand, and the 'upper arm' is actually the forearm.

Is this what it is? I don't know. Pangolins are African and Asian animals, but I frequently happened across specimens in universities and museums in the U.S. But there is something even more suspicious about it. Both the upper and lower limbs are attached to the trunk via plates of bone known as limb girdles, the shoulder and hip bones. These provide joints for the limbs and anchorage for the limb muscles. There is no indication whatever, the caption to the contrary, of any girdle bones in the photos. The appropriate area is shown, but no girdle bones. Alien anatomy may well vary from that on earth, but short of repealing the laws of mechanics, it cannot vary this much.

Taking these things together, I think it is a fabrication.

Case B-2 interests me especially as I was living in Texas in 1968, in Austin. In that year, together with another post-graduate student, I did field work at Big Springs. I did not see any military establishments, nor hear of any from the locals. Something not mentioned in case B-2 is that Big Springs is in the midst of a west Texas oil field, not where Texans would place a military base, at least not without retaining the mineral rights. Further the topography is quite rough, not the kind of place where roads capable of handling the "large, flat-bed tractor trunks" easily could go unnoticed. As I recall even the main highway through Big Springs at that time couldn't handle big trunks (for long).

None of this lends confidence to the stories. There are two however that I think are likely essentially true, but I doubt that they have anything to do with flying saucers. Case A-7 sounds suspiciously like recovery of a drone aircraft, either foreign or a wayward American craft. Stringfield's comment on this case suggests to me that he has not kept up to date on the use of surveillance aircraft. Item L (p. 37) also sounds more mundane than alien, may I suggest that it concerned an eastern block robot spy aircraft? That would obviously account for the secrecy. To those who feel that terrestrial aircraft are unlikely to stimulate these kinds of reports may I recommend the article on aircraft performance in *National Geographic* for January 1981 and *Aircraft 2000* by Bill Sweetman (Hamlyn, 1984), and Alfred Price's *The Instruments of Darkness* (Macdonald and Jane's, 1977) on electronic warfare. That the Blackbird, or SR-71, was already flying in 1964 implies a long history of high-performance aircraft development, in the U.S.A. at least. But I think that I would bet that it was being done elsewhere as well. Crashes of such craft could account for some of the reports of Stringfield.

I used to feel that UFO (and other) reports must be at least generally accurate and that no one could sincerely misperceive badly enough to mistake an airplane, for example, for a flying disk. After my five years as mammals curator at the Queensland Museum, I now wouldn't be surprised if some people could, quite honestly and sincerely, mistake a bathtub for a 747. That is doubtless an exaggeration, but if you doubt that this kind of thing does happen go in to your state museum and talk to the curators about the quality of descriptions of animals they receive from the public, and are asked to identify. I shall parade some of our experiences for you. I received a call from a gentleman who had found a mouse in his swimming pool. Not too odd, it was pre-occupied (or something) and fell in. But it was an odd mouse after all, it had 'a short tail and webbed forefeet'. In Australia there are honest-to-goodness mice, and marsupial 'mice' (such as antechinus). But neither have short tails nor webbed feet. Shrews have short tails and some have webbed feet - did one chance to come over on a ship and settle in Brisbane? Or could it even be some kind of previously unknown native mammal? Alas, no. It was a bat. 'A bat?' 'Yes, a bat, didn't you notice the wings?' 'Well, I did think the forefeet were just a bit large.' See what I mean?

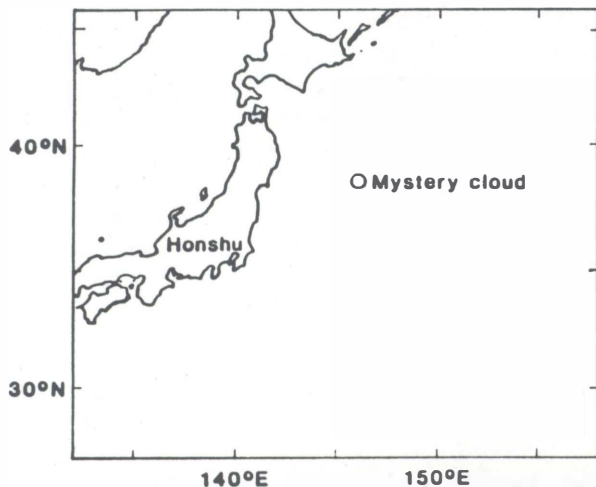
My assistant had a similar experience when he had a phone call reporting that a thylacine had been captured near Brisbane. It was 'large, dog-like with stripes'. With great enthusiasm off he went. Large, dog-like with stripes, what else could it possibly be? Well, as it turned out, just about anything. When he arrived he found the proud captors of a quoll or native cat. But it's not large he protested. Well, more or less large they said. It was less. It has white spots, not black stripes, he commented. Well spots and stripes are both much the same thing aren't they? He was too taken aback to reply - but he doesn't go out to check on thylacine reports anymore.

I think none of these people were deliberately trying to mislead. They were common, ordinary, everyday people who cannot observe or accurately describe, in some cases, even major details. Since so many of the details in Stringfield do not hold up, I am not convinced by many of the reports in this volume. Maybe he will come upon something really interesting, but still I am just as happy for him to do it - I am not tempted.



CLOUD OF MYSTERY

On 9th April 1984, a gigantic mushroom-like cloud was observed at approximately 38°30'N, 146°E - about 300Km off the coast of Japan. The crews of three separate commercial airliners en route from Tokyo, Japan to Anchorage, Alaska, stated that the cloud rose rapidly above stratiform clouds at about 4Km, eventually (in about 2 minutes) reaching an altitude of about 18Km, where it had expanded to a diameter of about 300Km.



The cloud was at first suspected to be the result of an explosion of some kind, possibly a nuclear submarine. However, no fireball or flash were observed; the aircraft instruments did not behave abnormally; and no unusual levels of radioactivity were detectable. Additionally, hydrophone

detectors at nearby Wake Island recorded no explosion-like phenomenon in the locality of the cloud, although there was a coincidental swarm of seismic shocks originating near Iwo Jima in the Mariana Islands. A study of wind conditions at the time ruled out any possibility of significant horizontal movement of the cloud, from any likely natural source into its observed position.

Investigators have concluded that the source of the cloud must have been either a hitherto unknown natural phenomenon, or a man(?) - made atmospheric (non-nuclear) explosion. The first of these guesses has a familiar ring to ufologists; the second raises the question of how could non-nuclear explosive equivalent to many kilotonnes of TNT get into the atmosphere at 38°30'N, 146°E! A cloud rising and expanding at the phenomenal rates exhibited in this event, must have been the consequence of an enormous burst of energy - most of which was apparently confined to the volume of the cloud. Such an energy release would appear to be beyond the reach of terrestrial technology at this time.

Obviously this event should be incorporated into the field of ufology, where it would take second place only to Tunguska in terms of energy magnitude. Like Tunguska, it should also be investigated through every possible avenue - the solutions to major mysteries can bring commensurate rewards.

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LETTER to the EDITOR

Sir,

I think your reviewer, Frank Gillespie, is unnecessarily negative in his review of Cynthia Hind's UFOs - African Encounters. Apart from the fact that he is reviewing a book published three years ago, hence written even earlier than that, I feel he does not make sufficient allowance for the difficulties of an investigator in a country with distances as great and populations as scattered as in Australia, but culturally infinitely less sophisticated.

I have been fortunate enough to hear Cynthia speak of her first-hand investigations among African 'tribespersons', as the local inhabitants are currently euphemised: and it was both amusing and salutary to hear her tell of the difficulties of establishing any kind of basis for communication with her informants. So any investigator in Africa is confronted with problems from the start, different from those facing an Australian or European investigator; and those difficulties arise again when the material is presented to the African public - and don't let us forget that her book was intended primarily for local consumption, only secondarily for more knowledgeable readers elsewhere.

Of course I have my reservations about the book, as any ufologist in more civilised parts of the world must have: and I dare say Cynthia herself has learned a lot in the past four years - haven't we all? I hope that some day soon she will give us a better and more penetrating book: but in the final reckoning, that will depend on whether she can find a publisher for it. I feel she deserves credit for giving us this first-hand report from Africa, whatever its shortcomings. If Africa boasted an effective investigative network, doubtless those shortcomings would not be in evidence; until then, let us be grateful that it has Cynthia Hind, for without her it would have no-one at all!

Hilary Evans

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by V. Vostrukhin, translated by Zbigniew Paprotny

Tu-134A airplane's flight no. 8352 (Tbilisi - Restov - Tallin) was performed by a crew of the Estonian branch of the USSR Ministry of Civil Aviation (1st pilot: I. A. Cherkashin - 7000 flight hours, 2nd pilot: G. I. Lazurin - 4500 hours, navigator: E. M. Ognev - 3500 hours, board engineer: G. M. Kozlov - 12500 hours).

At 4.10 a.m. the plane was about 120 km from Minsk. It seemed not to be flying - just hanging in the centre of the Universe. No sound in the headphones. They were alone in transparent air, as in a block of black glass with holes of stars.

The second pilot scanned visually his part of the sky. Above and to his right he noticed a little, five-kopek sized yellow speck, like a big unwinking star, with edges somewhat elongated. A very thin ray of light suddenly went down from the speck to the ground. The pilot discussed his discovery with the board engineer who, in turn, suggested they report it to the control station.

Meanwhile the ray turned into a bright cone of light. From this moment the show going on to the right of the plane was seen by all four. A second cone appeared, wider but paler than the first. Next a third one - wide and quite bright. The commander was reluctant however to report the discovery because he simply didn't know what to report.

Everybody, and pilots in particular, knows how difficult it is to estimate distance by eye. Nevertheless, each of the four crew members felt that the unknown object was about 40 - 50 km above the ground. The 2nd pilot started to sketch the unusual phenomenon. Unbelievably, illuminated houses and roads were clearly seen on the ground.

The beam of light rose up and set on the plane. Now they saw a blinding white point, surrounded by concentric coloured circles. The commander still hesitated about reporting all this. His doubts decreased when the white point exploded and green cloud took its place.

"Fired his engines and runs away" said the 2nd pilot.

It appeared to the commander however that the object was approaching with enormous speed, crossing the plane's route. On the 1st pilot's command the navigator started reporting to earth.

But - a strange coincidence - after his first words the object stopped. Stopped coming nearer, it appeared to the commander. Stopped running away, decided the 2nd pilot.

The air traffic controller in Minsk received the report from the plane and courteously informed them that he, personally, to his regret, sees nothing - either on the radar screen or in the sky. The 2nd pilot feared that they would be called abnormal.

The green cloud suddenly fell down, rushing past the plane's altitude. Next it went up, just as vertically. It rushed to the right, it rushed to the left. Once again, down - up. At last it settled precisely opposite the plane. It flew behind it as if it was tethered, ten thousand metres above the ground, at 800 km per hour.

"An honourable escort" muttered the captain.

Small lights began to sparkle inside the cloud. They flared like decorations on a New Year's tree. The fiery zigzags crawled horizontally. The navigator kept informing earth about it all.

The excited flight controller suddenly exclaimed "I see flashes of light on the horizon! Where is the cloud located?".

The navigator told him.

"I agree" said the controller.

The cloud kept changing. A 'tail' grew out of it, resembling a water-spout: wide at the top, narrow at the ground. Something like a comma formed. Then the tail began to rise up, while the cloud transformed from elliptical into four-corner-shaped.

"Look" said the 2nd pilot, "it mimics us".

Indeed, now they were escorted by a sharp-nosed 'cloud-plane' - without wings and with a bevelled tail. It shone with yellow and green light. In place of a true plane's nozzle a dense nucleus could have been guessed.

A stewardess came into the cockpit.

"The passengers are interested in what is flying alongside".

Cherkashin sighed.

"Tell them that it is a kind of cloud. Yellow where city lights struggle through the fog. Green.... say, northern lights".

At this time another 'real' plane entered the Minsk controller's zone of management. Tu-134 from Leningrad flew to meet the Tallin crew. The two planes were about



100 km apart. An enormous cloud-plane couldn't have gone unnoticed from such a distance. Questioned by Cherkashin, the commander of the approaching TU-134 replied however that he sees nothing. The Minsk controller, now clearly seeing the cloud-plane, transmitted its coordinates and direction to the Leningrad crew, but they literally go blind. Then only 15 km before meeting it they begin to see the phenomenon and described it accurately.

Much later, trying to explain what they had seen, Cherkashin's crew speculated that the object's light could have been polarized, i.e. not seen in all directions.

Together with a cloud-plane they passed Riga and Vilnius - the air traffic controllers in these towns successively sighted the strange tandem. Flying past Chudskoe and Pskovskoe lakes Cherkashin's crew was able to estimate the dimensions of the cloud-plane.

These two lakes, of elongated shape, are separated by a small isthmus. Tu-134A was flying about 120 km to their left, while the cloud-plane was to their right, nearer Tartu. From the point where - it seemed - the dense nucleus could have been guessed the beam sprang out again. The speck of light fell onto the clouds, and moved slowly across the ground. The object unwittingly betrayed its coordinates. Now it was possible to estimate that its length was equal to that of Pskovskoe lake.

The flight continued jointly up to the Tallin.

Tallin flight controller informed the crew after landing about the following interesting details. On the monitor of the Tallin airport radar tracking station not only Tu-134A had been seen. Following its image another two images moved slowly across the screen, though there were no other planes in the air at this time. In addition, those two images were constant, while the image formed by radar reflection from Tu-134A appeared and disappeared repeatedly.

"I would understand it if you were twinkling on the landing monitor's screen" said the controller. "But on the scanning locator it can't happen, it mustn't happen".

Comments by the corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences,  
N. A. Zheltukhin (v-chairman of the All-Soyuz Scientific-Technical  
Organisation's Commission for Anomalous Phenomena).

"The Commission carries out regular research of cases of UFO sightings, over the territory of the Soviet Union. We have already collected a lot of data. However - I should state it with regret - all reports at our disposal suffer in some degree from one-sidedness and vagueness. The observations reported by the Tallin crew have been investigated by the Estonian section of our Commission (I. Volke, E. Parvo and others). The case is really interesting though similar ones are known to us. That the object instantly reversed direction, that it reached the ground from an enormous height with a light beam of unusual power - all that is undoubtedly anomalous. However, in identifying the nature of the phenomenon the Commission firstly took into consideration the indications of localisation. If the phenomenon is localised, limited in space, then it may be claimed to be anomalous. The object's dimensions, as reported by the pilots, put us on our guard. It was truly big. It was natural to suppose therefore that somewhere far away, many thousands of kilometres, a global atmospheric or geophysical process occurred, of a type already known to scientists. To the pilots it could have appeared as being nearby - a typical, so to say, optical illusion. But this explanation turned out to be untenable. After all, the pilots had been able to determine distance to the object. There is therefore only one conclusion: the Tallin crew have dealt with what we call a UFO. Now we have a consecutive and detailed picture of the transformations of the unidentified flying object, and we consider this record to be particularly valuable. We have it thanks to oral descriptions and sketches made by G. Lazurin. We ask readers of 'Trud' newspaper once again to report all such observations to the address: 101000 Moscow, Main Post Office, P.O. Box 764, Commission for Anomalous Phenomena."

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